

danielle stoltz

being a fierce force of happiness

through your divorce



A step-by-step guide to increasing
your self-worth and confidence
during the whole shitshow

BEING A FIERCE FORCE OF HAPPINESS THROUGH YOUR DIVORCE

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Written by Danielle Stoltz

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Shit Show

Going through a divorce can completely shatter your confidence and self-worth... From the overwhelming feeling of failure, the realization that everything you thought your life was going to be was ending, the emotionally charged arguments, to discovering the worst version of yourself and your spouse... regardless of the circumstances of WHY you've ended up here, every bit of it takes a huge toll on you.

But instead of slipping into an anxiety-ridden depressed state, what if you could actually *increase* your self-worth and confidence through the whole shitshow?

Back when I first separated from my ex, nothing I was doing to try to improve my life and happiness was working. I was lacking fulfillment in everything I was doing, my confidence and self-worth had taken a fast nosedive, and I was in a pretty shitty space mentally and emotionally. Oh! And how could I forget about the

kids. It's possible I may have blocked that particularly difficult-to-swallow part out. Trying to be a functioning human being AND a good mother [let alone a *happy* one...] #missionimpossible. I knew I needed to do something – anything – everything in order to get my shit together.

If you're unhappy, find out why. And, no, I don't just mean "I'm unhappy because I'm getting divorced." That's a cop-out. WHY is this divorce crushing you? I mean REALLY WHY at its core. Don't know where to start? **Throw. The. Fucking. Book. At. It.** Not everything is going to work.

Not everything is going to stick. But all of it will help in exactly the way you need it to.

Instead of overwhelming you with every single thing I did over the course of the year between my separation and final divorce, I've outlined in this guide the 5 major actions I took that made the biggest impact for me. These are the things that helped completely rewire my brain and gave me the clarity to find the direction on where my life was headed once I successfully blew the old one up.

And you know what? I absolutely dominated what I thought was going to be #missionimpossible. By the time my divorce hearing finally arrived, I had truly become a fierce force of happiness in every way imaginable. And I promise you can do it too.

CHAPTER 1

Call Yourself Out On Your Bullshit

You're full of shit. Yes, I said it. We all are. Somewhere along the way we all started believing the very worst things about ourselves and our current situations. Do any of these thoughts sound familiar?

- We need to stay together for the kids.
- There's nothing better out there for me.
- No one else will ever love me.
- It's easier to stay than it is to leave.
- I won't make it on my own.

I know these are very cliché reasons why women stick around too long in a relationship that doesn't work. It doesn't change the fact that I debated with myself about every single one of them. And it also doesn't change the fact that all of these statements are dripping in a lack of self-worth and confidence. I was with my ex for 16 years. Which, when I started seriously thinking about splitting, was literally half of my life. Considering that length of time was *heavy*. It made my decision so much harder. Everything I knew and did

revolved around the man I married and had been with since I was 16 years old. We grew up together, but I started to realize that I had become half of “us” as opposed to becoming “me”. The surface reasons of why we needed to leave really don’t matter. We’re past that. What matters is where your head’s at now and how you’re processing what this break up means for YOU.

Let’s get to the root of it. Which of these second-tier bullshit lies do you tell yourself as “reasons” why the above arguments must be true?

- I’m not good enough.
- I’m not anything special.
- I’m insignificant.
- I’m fat and lazy.
- I’m full of shit.
- I don’t know what I’m doing.
- I’m a terrible wife and a crappy mother.
- My opinion doesn’t matter.
- I suck.
- I’m not worth the effort.

In true self-deprecating fashion, its SUUUUPPPPER easy to convince ourselves of this crap... and in turn, we end up making decisions out of fear rather than what we really want and deserve.



This next part was introduced to me by Chris Downing during a course I took with him called *The Power of I Am*.

It is by far one of the most powerful things and eye-opening exercises I've ever done.

Grab a notebook – write down every negative thought you've ever had about yourself. *All of it*. Yes, it's an assignment. Yes, it sucks. Yes, I cried when I did this. It's important; don't skip it!

Got them all written down? Good. Now here's what you are going to do now:

Next to every line item bullshit thought you have about yourself, I want you to write down *who told you that*. You heard me. Who told you that? You were NOT born thinking these things about yourself. Somewhere along the way, someone or something convinced you of this. And I'm not saying they did this on purpose. You've been made to feel this way because of someone else's own insecurities, issues, upbringing, alien abductions... whatever.

By allowing these thoughts to take up space in your mind, you've been basing your life decisions, your confidence, your self-worth on SHIT OTHER PEOPLE put in your head!

Believing this crap is allowing other people to live your life for you. How horrible does that sound? You're better than that. You deserve better than that. You're worth more than that. You're worth whatever you fucking want to be. How about we start living that way, ok?

CHAPTER 2

Flood Your Mind with Positive Noise

So we've figured out what bullshit lies we are telling ourselves... but now what? How do we scratch that record and rewrite our inner monologue? There is one thing I did that turned out to be the fastest way to fix my shit-tastic mood when I was trying to claw my way out of the hell I was in for the first few months after my separation. I'm talking about something I call "Positive Noise".

Your life is going to be filled with noise, no matter what you try to do to avoid it. So why not *deliberately* and *intentionally* ensure it is some seriously positive shit... instead of the garbage comparison game and complaint-heavy sounding board that every social media and news outlet seems to thrive off of these days? Of course, I'm not asking you to take on the [seemingly] difficult task of changing your entire life's habits.

Let's just try some baby steps to purposefully introduce POSITIVE noise to drown out some of the shit:

UNFOLLOW everything negative. We all know it's easier said than done to stop-the-scroll, especially when you're at a time in your life that you just need mindless distractions the most. Is it really making you feel better to see Susie Q with her IG highlight reel of her perfect family? Or listening to people complain about the STUPIDEST things when your life [as you knew at least] it is literally falling apart? Listen, even if it's your best friend from elementary school or your third cousin on your dad's side... If what they are posting triggers a negative emotion in any way... #unfollow [calm down... it's not permanent and they won't even know]. Protect your energy. Let's be honest, you likely have very little to spare anyway.

On the flip side – **FOLLOW** all the positive, empowering, and motivational accounts you can find. Trust me on this. The more you read things like “I think you're doing a beautiful job figuring out some heavy shit” or “you can't hate yourself into a version of yourself you can love,” the more you start to rewire your brain and believe it. Here are some of my favorite accounts to follow on IG: [@melrobbins](#) [@queenshealingqueens](#) [@oolalife](#) [@powerofpositivity](#)

MUSIC. It's therapy. Don't let it be the message you shouldn't hear right now. Love songs, songs about sad break ups, and for the love of God anything country... all they're going to do is make you more emotional. That's what music is designed to do – make you feel emotion. So let's magnify the emotions that you want to feel: happiness, confidence, empowerment, badass-

bitch-ness. Ditch the radio if you need to! Pandora or Spotify win the day anyway. My go-to stations to turn my attitude around during my hardest times? Kelly Clarkson & Lizzo Radio. Yep. #girlpower anthems make you feel incredible 110% of the time.

FUEL your mind. I've been talking about the importance of personal development for years. Yes, personal development, also known as [its much lesser valued title of] self-help. I hated the idea of reading anything that preached things implying that I needed to change or that I actually had to work for the type of life I wanted instead of it just getting it because I wanted it [hello entitled 20-something millennial stage of life, am I right?]. But y'all, I promise it's not the load of bullshit your soon-to-be former self thinks it is. Growth is one of the most important of our 6 basic human needs.

If we aren't growing, we are dying.

Now, I totally get what you're thinking. Especially if you're at the beginning of the huge life change that is divorce. EVERYTHING SUCKS RIGHT NOW. No book or podcast or motivational video is going to change that. *But it will.* Even if you don't believe it yet, read it anyway. Even if you feel like everything you're reading or listening to is stupid. Read. It. Anyway.

And don't come at me with your excuses of "but I hate/don't have time/don't want to read...". Download Audible or YouTube. Listen to it while you fold the endless mounds of laundry. Problem solved. I promise, even if

you don't like it at first, this will profoundly impact your mood and mindset.

Here are my top 5 favorite personal development books [in no particular order – I suggest you read them all!]:

The 5 Second Rule – Mel Robbins

Girl, Wash Your Face – Rachel Hollis

*The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck* – Mark Manson

You Are a Badass – Jen Sincero

Awaken the Giant Within – Anthony Robbins

Remember, the more you read and hear positive, empowering, and growth-focused noise, the faster you start to rewire your brain to actually believe it, feel it, and live it.

CHAPTER 3

Take Care of Your Damn Body

We've covered the important steps to take to start the process of rewiring your brain. Are you shocked to know that taking care of your body is the next step? Don't worry. Preaching "eat healthy and exercise" is not the hill I choose to die on. Everyone already knows how important it is for your health and wellbeing. Taking care of your physical body is important on so many other levels besides looking good and trying to avoid heart disease or diabetes.

How you feel physically on a daily basis is the foundation for literally everything in your life. How you think, what you do, your relationships with other people, your performance at work... it sets the tone for everything. If you feel foggy, sluggish, and have no energy, you're going to approach life with the same foggy and sluggish energy and get shitty results. It's just facts. And I can tell you this with 100% certainty because that's exactly how I felt and what I did when I separated from my ex.

I gained 70 pounds during the first 6 months after my ex and I separated. Yep. 70 freaking pounds in 6 months. Posterchild for taking care of my physical body, right? I let my depression and anxiety get the best of me. I didn't get up from the couch most days, let alone do anything even remotely close to exercising. UberEats became my best friend. Take out was easy and

God knows I just needed something easy because everything else was so fucking hard.

Cheese and bread and sweets made me feel better instantaneously. Of course, the dopamine hit from the delicious food didn't last very long, but that's why we have 3 meals and 2 snacks a day, am I right?

As easy and efficient this approach was to giving me a temporary high of good feelings, eating nothing but carbs and fats from the comfort of my couch for half of a year did HORRIBLE things to my body, mind, mood, attitude, relationships with my kids... you name it, it sucked. Not to mention, I was literally incapable of mentally or emotionally dealing with any of the logistics of the actual impending divorce. I'm sure you can imagine how well conversations with the ex went when I was in this state #justkillmenow.

The worst part about it all was that I knew better! Everyone knows... eating healthy and exercising is the answer. I'm a smart woman, why can't I stop this train wreck? I mean, damn, I had just lost 100 pounds the year prior! I literally knew exactly what to do, how to

do it, and had already proven I could. My inner mean girl had a fucking field day with this by the way. Shit on shit is what was happening. Shit food 100% of the time results in a shitty mindset 100% of the time. A shitty mindset produces shitty results in all the things. How you feel physically has a direct and powerful effect on your happiness, self-worth, and confidence.

So how do you stop the madness? Well for one thing, you go broke REAL quick ordering takeout that often... but I digress. As it stands right now, I don't have all the answers. I have "stopped the bleeding" and managed to lose 20 of the 70 pounds I exchanged for my marriage. The important thing to note is that the weight loss wasn't my driving factor here. Through the help of my therapist and my personal life coach (which I'll tell you more about in the next chapter), I came to terms with the fact that my 100 pound weight loss success the year prior was not for me. It was for my husband at the time. He thought I'd be happier if I lost weight. He told me that and I believed him so I did it. And it worked! I was happier.

The part that I failed to realize back then is that I wasn't happier because I was smaller. I was happier because I was taking care of myself.

Fueling my body with nutrients instead of crap [most of the time... your girl still loved bread and cheese]. Exercising daily to have 30 minutes of me-time and the excellent side effect of endorphins being released. I felt better and I was happier. So all I needed to do was re-

write that experience for where I was now and started doing small, focused, and deliberate things to just start *feeling better*. Here's what's working for me right now:

Eat more vegetables. I don't care how many cups a day. I don't care what else you eat during the day. Upping your intake of veggies, deliberately having veggies with every meal, forcing yourself to stuff down some carrots before you grab that bag of chips actually makes a huge difference. They're sneaky like that... filling you up and giving your body the nutrients it craves. Want pizza? Cool. I approve. Just order a salad or some roasted brussels sprouts with it. Steamfresh and Daily Harvest veggie bowls are now staples in my freezer. Do I microwave them? Yes. Do I add way too much cheese? Also yes. But I'm achieving my number one goal of eating more veggies while still fulfilling my need for something easy and delicious. Small but mighty action step here.

Move your freaking body. Don't care how. And I don't mean go to the gym every day for 3 hours [unless that sounds fun to you!]. Take a walk around the freaking neighborhood. Stretch. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Dance with your kids. Just don't sit on the couch all day. I knew I needed to do something but jumping right back into the daily workouts I had done for years just wasn't working for me anymore. It was just too much. And I finally got over myself and realized that it's OK and no one is going to die if I don't do what I used to do. The fastest way to change your state is through your physiology (aka movement). Random dance parties with my girls, taking the stairs, and parking in the furthest spot at the grocery store are .my

go-to movements at the moment. And now that I'm coming out the other side of this, I'm starting a new kickboxing boot camp in a couple of weeks. PROGRESS. Setting your goal for the day to "just move" is achievable, even on a bad day.

Supplements. I don't mean diet pills, or a tub of something that advertises as a weight loss magic in a tub. Get your hands on something rich with nutrients to give your body what it needs. Add in a protein shake that makes you feel like you're having dessert. Make a swap that actually works for you. I drank a superfoods shake daily when I lost 100 pounds. It's excellent, delicious, curbed my cravings, and I loved drinking it every day. Until I didn't... because it coincided with the "doing it for him" thought process I figured out about that time in my life. So I found something different that I also enjoy, has incredible benefits, and helps increase my happy hormones. It works for me so I drink it.



Will this be what works for me tomorrow? Who knows. I've learned that this whole loving and working on my body journey is nothing if not fluid. If you keep up with me on IG, you already know I enjoy keeping you up to date on way too much information about myself and what I'm up to. But if you're new here, connect with me [@danielle.stoltz](https://www.instagram.com/danielle.stoltz) to see where I'm at and what's working for me now!

CHAPTER 4

Use Your Freaking Resources

It's a lot. I get it. If you're anything like me, you feel like you're spiraling, directionless, unworthy, not enough, lost. You've lost your confidence, don't think you can do this most days, feeling like a victim and totally and utterly alone. But know this: you are not alone. You're not on an island by yourself with no escape. No matter how alone you think you are or how loud your inner mean girl is when she tells you that you're worse off than anyone on the planet ever, **YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**

The easiest thing to do when you're going through a hard time is to seclude yourself. I know, because I did it. I was hurting and negative all the time and didn't want to talk to anyone or spread my shit attitude to other people. Me, Netflix, and UberEats were doing just fine wallowing in our self-pity, thank you very much... #liesitoldmyself.

I already told you how that perfect storm affected my body, mood, and pretty much everything in my life. But

besides getting a grip on my health, what truly helped snap me out of the vicious self-loathing state I was in was using my resources and letting other people back into my life. Talk to your friends. They *actually do* want to know how you're doing. If they want to come over and spend time with you, let them. It doesn't matter that your house is a wreck or that you haven't showered in a week.

Let people be there for you however they want to.

The universe sends you exactly what you need when you need it, and I promise you that adult human interaction is what you need to help pull you out of your funk.

The biggest hurdle for me was coping with the fact that I was feeling like a failure. My inner mean girl is a raging perfectionist, and therefore was VERY angry with me for what she considered to be an epic failure. When you're in your own head about the divorce and replaying every single moment that got you to this point, your mean girl will convince you of the worst every single time. It's her job. As ass backwards as it sounds, she's just trying to protect you by attaching as many negative feelings to a painful situation as possible so that you don't do it again. Good plan in theory; impossible to deal with in an emotional state at best.

It took me way too long to realize that dealing with my thoughts on this "epic failure" were something I really needed some next level help with. Don't be like

me. Ask for help. Actively seek out help. Therapy did wonders for me, not because my therapist is a genius who told me brand new knowledge that changed my life instantly. But because she let me talk it through. I'm sure this may come a shock to all of you, but I like to talk... I mean she really didn't get much in edgewise if we're being honest. Speaking my feelings out loud to someone who is not biased and doesn't know my ex was incredibly freeing. Not letting all the nonsense stay bottled up and festering inside my head actually left some room in there for normal, productive thoughts and feelings. And I started to finally feel like I was getting a grasp on my own life again.

Slowly but surely, you'll start to feel more like yourself, or at a minimum... less crazy. Don't be surprised if you come out of that first black hole still a little lost though. Your life as you knew it is over. I don't mean that in a morbid way, though.

On paper, everything is different when you go from being part of an "us" to "just you".

Regardless of your history with your ex or how much time you were together, that's a pretty big deal. It can leave you feeling empty or unworthy or not enough all over again if you let it.

Don't let it! Find something that is yours. Take a new class, join a gym, learn to play the guitar, write a book. Nothing is too silly or too big. Because guess what? It's yours. True to form for me, I wanted to continue on

my personal growth path, knowing there was more I wanted out of life than just having all my checkboxes checked. My “just for me” find was a mindset coach that helped me uncover what I really wanted out of life. Apparently, I wanted to write a book and just hadn’t realized it yet. And, hey! You’re looking at a direct result of that decision I made.

There are so many of us out there with similar experiences and feelings. Use your resources, community, and friends.

Don't discount the benefit of relationships with other people just because the one you had in your marriage didn't work out.

Life is incredible... if you let it be! Don't let a blip on the radar define who YOU are and where YOUR life is meant to take you.

CHAPTER 5

Forgive Him

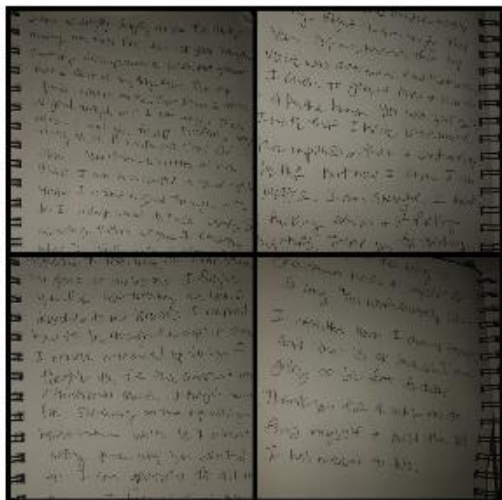
This may be the hardest “ask” I will throw at you. Forgive your ex. It doesn’t matter what they did or what you did or any part of the circumstances surrounding your divorce. Read that again... it doesn’t matter. This is about YOU. Not them. Holding onto your anger, hurt, resentment, or hatred doesn’t affect them in any way. The only person it is hurting is you. A quote by Nelson Mandela really stuck out to me during my healing process:

“Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies.”

I actually heard this for the first time while looking for a morning meditation clip on YouTube [try anything and everything, right?] and it struck me right in my core. What good was my anger towards my ex doing? Absolutely none. All it was doing was making me feel like a victim [which I HATED] and lacing everything I did throughout the day with fire-red fury. It was *so exhaust-*

ing being pissed off all the time. On top of having no energy, my brain was too busy being mad to let anything else process through it. I was mentally holding myself back from moving forward on literally everything.

So I'm tasking you with the same exercise that my mentors tasked me with: forgive your ex. Not for their benefit. For yours. And don't just think "ok fine, I forgive him." I mean really work through exactly what you are forgiving them for. The best way I've found to do this is to write them a letter. You won't give it to them, that's not the point. It's for YOU, remember? Just let all your thoughts and feelings flow out. Be pissed off while you right it. Cry if you have to. But write it. Do it now.



Once you've written it all down, feel it. I want you to feel everything you're feeling *deeply*. These are valid emotions. What you think and feel is **real** and **important** and **deserves to be acknowledged**.

NOW BURN IT. Yes, literally burn it. Watch it go up in flames and disintegrate into nothing but ashes. And while you're watching it, consciously release that anger, hurt, resentment, or hatred that you've been holding onto. Your life, happiness, confidence, and self-worth are no longer attached to how you feel about someone else. It's yours. Take it back.



CONCLUSION

Be. Do. Have.

We've covered a lot of ground in this guide and you now have some really good, tangible ways to start being the fierce force of happiness you are meant to be, despite all the nonsense that is going on with the logistics of your divorce.

Focusing on your healing is everything right now. Not just passively, but actively doing things to improve your self-worth and confidence is the key to feeling better, regardless of what your version of feeling better may entail.

Quit believing lies you and others have told you about yourself. It's all bullshit. Re-write your own script because you CAN. Who do you want to be?

Fuel your mind with more positivity than negativity. The scales (and your outlook on life) will tip in your favor faster than you think.

Take care of your body, even if it's just in small ways at first. How you feel physically is the foundation for everything in your life.

Use your damn resources. Don't be stubborn... ask for help and don't seclude yourself. Humans need other humans. And if you don't have anyone in your circle, contact me. I'm your girl.

Forgive him. Do it for you because you deserve to let go of it. Stop drinking poison hoping it's going to do anything other than slowly kill you.



The last task I want to leave you with is this: *forgive yourself.*

“Forgive yourself for not knowing better at the time. Forgive yourself for giving away your power. Forgive yourself for past behaviors. Forgive yourself for the survival patters and traits you picked up while enduring trauma. Forgive yourself for being who you needed to be.” – Audrey Kitching

You, my friend, are an incredible human and you deserve to feel that way about yourself every damn day. Be. Do. Have. Focus on who you need to *BE* in order to get through this massive life change will better prepare you to *DO* things to get you there. Master this and I promise you will achieve the things and emotions you want to *HAVE*.